824
283 from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called
324 "arag", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fala" which resembles papyrus and
293 grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

372 Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

386 Dyestuff - the bark of the "wayba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

222 Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by collecting, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

388 Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Sircunia Abyssinica).

824
281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

285 415 especially the use of milk (also found in pottery), is typically African.

Reeds, fibers (including the musa ensete and baobab), and grasses already mentioned are used to produce many types of articles, equal in variety only to pottery, and in numbers even exceeding.

285 415 352 The reed table, "mässob" is one of the most noteworthy, for every household has several, in different sizes, and usually one with ornamental geometric designs woven into it by means of dyed reeds. In principle it is a combination breadbasket and table, for by lifting the lid the former turns into the latter. The diameter at the top may be as much as 2 feet, just high enough to be comfortable for eating while seated on a mat on the ground. Thus the cylindrical, almost hourglass-shaped leg of the same tightly woven reeds, may be from 1 foot to 2 feet high. The lid fits tightly inside, so that flies and even ants cannot enter; it is of the same type found in the Sudan and parts of North Africa.

285 293 The next most noteworthy item of woven fiber is the famous sun umbrella, "jan tela" (lit. the emperor's shade, from "zehon", elephant). Formerly a royal prerogative, then a feudal one, it is now owned by every peasant housewife, and in provincial towns purchasable at the big market for ETH$2.-(US$0.80). This umbrella is unfoldable, made of strong ribs of split bamboo (called "qergaha"), bent almost semi-circular; the central wooden stick ending in a woven plate above the shade itself; the sections woven tight enough to keep out the sun, though not watertight.

439 bales of finished material include white khaki, "mäbruq"; a thinner and cheaper quality, "mahmädi"; and colorful prints, sometimes of rayon and even silk, "balä manäter", used by the Coptic clergy to wrap the tabot in, or to make colorful umbrellas for processions.

In the past, most imports were for the top feudal chiefs and the clergy (e.g. chintz for the mantle replacing some uses of the older burnos). Now every 439 291 Amhara, even if poor, wants to own a pair of white Jodphurs, for going to town, to church and to special feasts. In the cities, the semi-educated now also sport a long-sleeve, khaki bush jacket, the "duba", worn usually under a light shamma instead of a peasant one, and only fully educated top officials have gone over to full European dress. This has steadily increased imports of 439 cotton cloth, ever since Menelik's victories made even the poorer Amhara feel "noble". The sun-umbrella once [293] reserved for the king, "jan tela" became the ambition of every peasant housewife. Little porcelain cups, "fenjal", are often the only item of foreign origin, besides cotton cloth, found even in remote hamlets, for the use of honored guests.

The drawing power of the big markets was increased still more when the Italians built roads to some of them during 1936-1940. Their heavy trente-quatro trucks bring imported items mostly from Asmara and the Red Sea coast: blankets, wood or glass beads for necklaces, sandals, Egyptian rubber sneakers, Yemen incense and

795 off by cutting its throat.

It may be that the use of the formula became empha-
[171] tic centuries ago, as an equivalent-though-distinctive
counterpart to the Muslim formula "Iin the name of Allah
[293] the all-merciful, and Muhammad hid his prophet". Ano-
ther such distinction is almost certainly the blue neck-
cord, "mätäb" which both male and female Abyssinian Cäpts
[784] wear to distinguish them from Muslims. But their other
religious laws and taboos seem to date back to the Old
Testament observances of Judaism, notable the taboo on
the pig, which is not even raised outside (European Ad-
dis Ababa.

795 As a consequence of the religiosity of the peo-
779 ple, the rules of the church have the force of law, un-
challenged especially in the rural areas. Even the more
modernized administration and new legislation has made
little change in the close inter-relation of church and
state functions, at the grassroots level. This inter-
relation is even closer in the form of social pressure.
Foreign observers have remarked that without this church
organization the social structure of the country would
fall to pieces and lose its coherence.

795 Another significant factor is the large number
of persons consecrated, or partly consecrated to the
church service. Besides priests, monks and nuns there
are boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes,
and other semi-laymen attached to the church, whose to-
tal number has been estimated at from 10% to 20% of the
population, particularly the male population.

793 beneath kneelength shirt ("qämis") and shamma; often
292 they wear sandals. They usually let a full beard grow
[293] as richly as it will. Another private symbol of priestly nobility is an abbreviated "maqomya" leaning staff, shorter, without crutch, topped by an ivory knob and equipped as a walking stick, called "sände kahanat", with an iron point at the bottom.

In church parades, priests and deacons add colorfully embroidered garments of imported and embroidered velvet, rayon, silk, brocade, etc., often cut like the ancient leopard-skin in sleeveless capes which hang from the shoulders over front and back. If of domestic origin, the holy day garments are dyed black or red. Embroidery is of gold or silver thread, and sometimes includes gold or silver filigree plates in geometric patterns (e.g.the
[293] sun). On such occasions the ordinary sun umbrella ("jantela") of reeds gives way to a colorful umbrella of imported cloth, in which red and gold predominate. It is now often attached to the ribs of a modern umbrella. The black cape ("kaba") is held across the chest with a metal (often silver) clasp or chain.

293 On such holy day parades, clergy and upper-class
778 persons married in a eucharistic ceremony ("qurban"), wear the metal crown, "akiil". This is one of the most valuable of each church's possessions, always locked in the church when not in use, usually donated by noble sponsors. They are usually made of silver, or at least of brass, and the older more traditiona ones are shaped in tiered stories of circles narrowing toward the top

293 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.
778 In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, theproper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. Smaller crosses are used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engraved verses. The method of casting is the"cire perdue", which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "maqomya" crutch. In front of old churches, resonant stones are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. Very common is the sistrum, called "sänässel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

852 unbaptized during this period of ritual impurity.

852 304 Another Old Testament survival, which is considered more customary than religious, is circumsision. Boys are circumcised about a week after birth, but not usually on Wednesday or Friday fast days. In some regions, notably Gojjam, girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed by a woman in a strictly female gathering, so that the girl will not become a "selfish" wife, and will be happy in marriage. After these operations, the babies may be blessed by a priest. However, when an adult person becomes Christian, circumcision or clitoredtomy are not performed, since they are not required.

293 At baptism, the baby receives the blue neck-cord, 852 553 the "mätäb", which forever after distinguishes him from a Muslim. The priest gives or confirms the Christian name of the child, usually one that places the child under the protection and guidance of a saint or archangel, such as "Gäbre-Mikaël" (Servant of Michael). However, in later life, most children will use and be called by the "world name" given them by their mothers at time of birth, such as "Taamrat" (miracle, e.g if the husband suddenly returned from a distant and dangerous trip at the time) for a boy, or "almaz" (diamond) or other sparkling name for a girl. The Christian name may be used later in life if the person becomes a priest or monk or nun, or participates in "qurban" (eucharistic marriage in church).

608 852 Every baby baptized, also every new adult convert, is given godparents. When a slave was baptised (prior

562 The commoner woman may not
565 carry a "ṣ̌era" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horse-
293 hair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely pre-
sumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a ṣ̌era, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 With advancing age, past menopause, the social
888 position of the commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "emmä bet" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesenna" (from "qäs", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to
602 women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

X794 796 [688] realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salämtew. Back on her throne, Lady Säläm"tew harshly admonishes the audience for dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Säläm"tu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)". When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

X794 535 796 About 1A.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer. Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxicated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Säläm"tew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and [293] faster, Lady Säläm"tew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920) 1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

The Abyssinian lady and gentleman are frequently to be seen with a black satin three-quarter mantle, ornamented by a little gold braid round the neck and generally a coloured silk lining. In the rainy season a black woollen-hooded cape or *burnous* is donned by all classes, women wearing the hood at the back, and men sporting theirs on their left shoulder. The *burnous* is also a sign of mourning, for which purpose people of every class wear it.

A further, and less pleasant, sign of mourning is for the bereaved one to refrain from washing his clothes; but I only observed this practice in connection with servants and persons of humble position. Ordinarily they are very keen on washing their white garments, and even on trek there was a great "clean-up" whenever we stayed in camp for an extra twenty-four hours. The day before our return into Addis was always the occasion for the most lavish use of soap and water, and the *safari* on arrival looked really quite smart, the men all having donned spotless white *chammas*, shirt, and trousers for the occasion, when, I am bound to say, they looked externally a good deal cleaner than our travel-stained garments allowed us to do.

A cartridge belt of various colours and designs, from the plain native leather to the gold and silk embroidered specimen, is more or less generally worn by the men, and its value is also often an indication to the position or means of the wearer. In its place women use a girdle of some sort, to which is attached their keys, ear-cleaners, head-scratchers, and small silver ornaments. Parasols of neatly plaited grass, intermixed with coloured cottons, are carried frequently by both sexes in all seasons. These are quite picturesque, and no doubt serve their

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

main purpose, but of course they cannot be closed up. Ordinary umbrellas are never used by the Abyssinians, though huge and brilliant coloured umbrellas are used by priests and other important personages on ceremonial occasions.

On feast days the chiefs and other functionaries at Court change their cotton shirt for one of silk or satin, gorgeously embroidered in gold and silver, and in various colours. And finally a pelerine of bright-coloured cloth of velvet, or, better still, of lion or black leopard skin ornamented in silver and silver-gilt, is permitted to be worn by those only whom it is desired to distinguish on account of specially meritorious conduct, generally in war.

The full-dress costume of a Ras or Dejazmach, with bristling lion's mane head-dress, velvet cape with lion's mane collar, embroidered in gold and silver-gilt, and gala shield and sword-scabbard covered with velvet and embossed with silver-gilt ornamentation, is a really magnificent one, and the appearance of Dejazmach Nado, the envoy to King George in 1919, at Buckingham Palace in this dress caused quite a sensation.

Mention must also be made of one article which is an indispensable adjunct to the dress of every Christian Abyssinian, and that is the *matab*, a silken cord carrying an amulet or charm, which is worn round the neck as the badge of their faith.

The gentler sex affect as much jewellery of all sorts, bracelets, rings, anklets, necklaces, earrings, etc., as they are able to procure; these are of native make as already described. As a general rule they have extraordinarily small *attaches*, and of all the native bracelets that we collected in and round Addis Ababa none

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of course, the imperial court. The *makuānnent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discretion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shouldering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *tajj* prepared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos*, the dark wool cloak of the nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color reserved for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abyssinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mā'erg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The *makuānnent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary Amharic the term *makuānnent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmāch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitāwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qañāzmāch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmāch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitāwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmāch*.

† *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

builds a tiny thatch hut near the home of his tutor, wears ragged, unsheared sheepskins, and gets his meals by begging. He lives thus for a year or two, until he has mastered the fourteen varieties of chants used in the various masses, and perhaps special chants like the *Praise of Mary* (*Weddāssē Māryām*) which are sung on holidays.

The other, and more important, qualification for the priesthood is marriage according to the law of the church. After a deacon has been married in the customary manner and lived with his wife for at least forty days, their marriage must be solemnized by the celebration of the Eucharist. Thereafter he may not divorce her or remarry if she dies.

With these conditions satisfied, the candidate for priesthood may travel to the *abuna* and be ordained. He acquires thereby the power to bind and to absolve, and is granted full knowledge of the mysteries of the *tābot*. The new priest attaches himself to a church, and is given his share of the monthly assignments for conducting the Mass. This is his main responsibility, though as he grows older he will also acquire confessants to whom he will give advice and assign penances.

Apart from these duties, the life of an Abyssinian priest in many ways resembles that of his lay neighbors. He plows his fields and harvests his crops. He may do business at the markets, or add to his income by weaving. Perhaps the chief difference in his manner of life is the habit of spending time in the "gate of peace," a little building near the church where the clergy assemble after services for hours of drinking *tallā* and idle conversation.

In reward for his services—and this is normally the chief inducement to become a priest—the priest is given a share of the revenues in kind brought in from lands owned and managed by the church. He may also be given some land owned by the church to cultivate for himself. In addition, he receives gifts in kind from his confessants periodically, is entitled to take part in the various feasts to which priests are regularly invited, and is likely to receive some bequest from time to time.*

The insignia of the priest are modest, but they suffice to inform the stranger that here is a man to be shown special respect: a white turban wrapped around the head and a cross carried in the hand, to be kissed by all comers. Older priests often carry a fly-whisk made of horsehair, and a wicker sun umbrella.

Though there are devout and kindly men among them, the Ethiopian priests have never been particularly noted for their moral qualities. Often they are ungenerous and scheming, and ready to exploit their position at the expense of the laity. They are poorly educated in their own tradition, stuttering

* A sheep, or at least a sheepskin—insurance that the Memorial Mass will be properly performed on the fortieth day after the donor's death.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[P.174-8]

FIG. 27.—*A deacon*

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FIG. 28.—*Group of* dabtarā

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FIG. 29.—*An old priest*